

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.-2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously presented) The network photograph service system of claim 61, wherein said template is transmitted among said plurality of laboratories via the network.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Previously presented) The network photograph service system of claim 61, wherein each of said plurality of laboratories registers a new template to the center server when the new template is obtained at said one laboratory.

6.-27. (Canceled).

28. (Previously presented) The network photographic service system of claim 63, wherein management of the transaction includes calculating the cost to be paid to each laboratory for storing the digital image data, or the communication charge for the digital image data.

29. (Previously presented) The network photographic service system of claim 63, wherein the center server charges the customer based on a result related to the management of the transaction.

30.-48. (Canceled).

49. (Previously presented) A network photograph service method, comprising:
providing a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server in which picture images have been stored, and a single center server installed in a service center in which picture images as image data whose resolution is lower than the resolution of the picture images stored in the laboratories have been stored;
making the digital image data stored in the center server accessible on the network;

selecting one photo-finishing laboratory out of said plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from a customer via the network; and

providing the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service,

wherein the center server stores the digital image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored as high resolution image data, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the high resolution image data of the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information.

50. (Previously Presented) The network photograph service method as defined in claim 49, wherein the center server further includes:

recording the processing instructed to each laboratory server by transmitting the instruction information, and managing a transaction occurring between the photo finishing laboratories and/or between the center server and each photo finishing laboratory, based on the record.

51. (Previously Presented) The network photograph service method as defined in claim 49, wherein the center server storing includes storing a template, and making includes making the template accessible on the network, and the center server further comprises transmitting information regarding the template specified by the order information as a portion of the instruction information when a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the instruction information, and

the laboratory server includes generating the manipulated print using the template, based on the instruction information.

52. (Previously Presented) The network photograph service method as defined in claim 49, wherein the center server storing includes storing a template, and making includes making the template accessible on the network, and further comprises transmitting information regarding the template specified by the order information as a portion of the instruction information when a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the instruction information, and

the laboratory server includes generating the manipulated print using the template, based on the instruction information.

53. (Previously Presented) The network photograph service method as defined in claim 49, wherein said center server further comprises:

judging whether or not processing for the requested printing service requires special equipment when assigning the selected photo-finishing laboratory to output the order print, and, if the processing requires special equipment, said center server selecting a special photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, instead of the photo-finishing laboratory which stores the high resolution image data for outputting the ordered print.

54. (Previously Presented) The network photograph service method as defined in claim 53, further comprising:

transferring to the special photo-finishing laboratory information indicating the photo-finishing laboratory that is storing the high resolution image data for outputting the ordered print as order information.

55. (Previously presented) A computer program product comprising a computer-readable medium having computer program logic stored therein for enabling a processor in a

computer system to perform network photograph service processing, said computer program logic enabling the processor to:

provide a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server in which picture images have been stored, and a single center server installed in a service center in which picture images as image data whose resolution is lower than the resolution of the picture images stored in the laboratories have been stored;

make the digital image data stored in the center server accessible on the network;

select one photo-finishing laboratory out of said plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from a customer via the network; and

provide the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a choice of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service,

wherein the center server stores the digital image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored as high resolution image data, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the high resolution image data of the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information.

56. (Previously Presented) The computer program product network as defined in claim 55, said computer program logic further enabling the processor to:

record the processing instructed to each laboratory server by transmitting the instruction information, and manage a transaction occurring between the photo finishing laboratories and/or between the center server and each photo finishing laboratory, based on the record.

57. (Previously Presented) The computer program product network as defined in claim 55, said computer program logic further enabling the processor to:

store a template,
make the template accessible on the network,
transmit information regarding the template specified by the order information as a portion of the instruction information when a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the instruction information, and
generate the manipulated print using the template, based on the instruction information.

58. (Previously Presented) The computer program product network as defined in claim 55, said computer program logic further enabling the processor to:
store a template,
make the template accessible on the network,
transmit information regarding the template specified by the order information as a portion of the instruction information when a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the instruction information, and
generate the manipulated print using the template, based on the instruction information.

59. (Previously Presented) The computer program product network as defined in claim 55, said computer program logic further enabling the processor to:
judge whether or not processing for the requested printing service requires special equipment when assigning the selected photo-finishing laboratory to output the order print, and, if the processing requires special equipment, select a special photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, instead of the photo-finishing laboratory which stores the high resolution image data for outputting the ordered print.

60. (Previously Presented) The computer program product network as defined in claim 59, said computer program logic further enabling the processor to:

transfer to the special photo-finishing laboratory information indicating the photo-finishing laboratory that is storing the high resolution image data for outputting the ordered print as order information.

61. (Previously presented) A network photograph service system comprising:

a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server which stores picture images as image data; and

a single center server installed in a service center, which receives a printing service order via a network, wherein the center server stores picture images recorded by a customer as digital image data, makes the digital image data accessible on the network, selects one photo-finishing laboratory out of said plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from the customer via the network, and provides the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service,

wherein the center server stores templates as image data, makes the templates accessible on the network, and transmits information regarding at least one template specified by the order information, as a portion of the instruction information when a manipulated printing service using the template is requested by the order information,

wherein the center server stores the image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information, and

wherein the photo-finishing laboratory selected to output the print carries out processing the picture image to be printed by synthesizing the picture image and the template specified by the order information, and carries out printing of the manipulated image.

62. (Previously presented) A network photograph service system as defined in claim 61, wherein the resolution of the picture images stored in the center server is lower than the resolution of the picture images stored in the laboratories.

63. (Previously presented) A network photograph service system comprising:
a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories, each including a laboratory server; and
a single center server installed in a service center, which receives a printing service order via a network, wherein the center server selects one photo-finishing laboratory out of said plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to output a print in response to order information transferred from a customer via the network, and provides the printing service requested in the order by transmitting instruction information to the laboratory server installed in the selected photo-finishing laboratory, thereby enabling the customer to select a desired photo-finishing laboratory out of a plurality of photo-finishing laboratories to perform the printing service,
wherein the center server maintains a record of processing instructed for each laboratory server by transmitting the instruction information, and manages a transaction occurring between the photo-finishing laboratories and/or between the center server and each photo-finishing laboratory, based on the record.

64. (Previously presented) A network photograph service system as defined in claim 63, wherein each laboratory server stores picture images as image data; and
wherein the center server stores picture images as the image data in correlation with storage location information showing the laboratory server in which the image data is stored, and selects, upon selection of the photo-finishing laboratory to output the print, the photo-finishing laboratory in which the laboratory server stores the picture image whose print has been ordered, based on the storage location information.

65. (New) The network photograph service system of claim 61, wherein the order information is sent from a personal computer of the customer to the center server via the network.

66. (New) The network photographic service system of claim 63, wherein said order information is sent from a personal computer of the customer to the center server via the network.

67. (New) A method for ordering a print at a personal computer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an order of a print of an image represented by image data of a customer at the personal computer, the order being made with reference to thumbnail images of the customer stored in a center server that is provided in a service center for receiving orders of prints, the center server being capable of communicating with a laboratory server provided in each of a plurality of laboratories, each having a photograph printer;

receiving information regarding a method for sending the print to the customer, the information including whether the print should be sent by mail;

when the information regarding the method for sending the print indicates that the print should be sent by mail, generating order information that represents the content of the order of the print and includes the address of the customer, and when the information regarding the method for sending the print indicates that the print should be sent using a method other than the mail, generating order information that represents the content of the order of the print and includes the e-mail address of the customer; and

sending the order information to the center server through the network.

68. (New) A method for ordering a print at a personal computer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an input of a password for accessing, through the network, image data stored in a server;

accessing, through the network, image data representing a low-resolution image of the image, the print of which will be ordered, and template image data representing a low-resolution template image of a template that will be synthesized with the image, the print of which will be ordered, wherein the data amount of the image data representing the low-resolution image of the image is lower than that of image data representing a high-resolution image of the image that will be used to produce the print, and wherein the data amount of the template image data representing the low-resolution template image of the template is lower than that of template image data representing a high-resolution template image of the template that will be used to produce the print;

receiving an instruction for synthesizing image data by combining the image data representing the low-resolution image and the template image data representing the low-resolution template image;

synthesizing the image data based on the instruction;

receiving an order for a photograph print service, the order including a method for receiving a print of an image corresponding to the synthesized image data;

generating order information about the synthesized image data, the order information representing the content of the order for the photograph print service, and the order information including a processing procedure for inserting the low-resolution image into a blank area of the low-resolution template image; and

sending the order information to the server.